



Testimony of Eric W. Gjede
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Before the Committee on Government Administration & Elections
March 7, 2016

**Testifying in opposition to HB 5512:
AN ACT AUTHORIZING ADDITIONAL FEES FOR MUNICIPAL PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTED FOR COMMERCIAL
PURPOSES**

Good afternoon Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila, Senator McLachlan, Representative Smith, and members of the Government Administration & Election Committee. My name is Eric Gjede and I am assistant counsel at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), which represents more than 10,000 large and small companies throughout the state of Connecticut.

CBIA opposes HB 5512.

HB 5512 seeks to allow municipalities to charge additional fees for copies of public records if these records are to be used for commercial purposes.

We are concerned this bill will serve to reduce the public's access to public records. The reason a person or business seeks a public records should be immaterial to the municipality. This proposal requires the municipality to make a value judgment about the intentions of the person seeking the record. This could lead to abuse by a municipal official that seeks to limit access to records by placing a financial hurdle in front of the individual requesting it.

HB 5512 reduces local government transparency and accountability to its citizens. For these reasons, we urge you to take no action on HB 5512.